

AMENDMENTS

In The Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A spinal implant, comprising:
~~the implant including~~ a porous component; and
one or more fibrous filling elements provided within the porous component.
2. (Currently Amended) The implant of claim 1, in which the implant is at least one of a partial nucleus pulposus replacement [[or]] and a total nucleus replacement.
3. (Currently Amended) The implant of claim 1, ~~or claim 2~~ in which the porous component is a ~~bag or other form of~~ container having an opening to permit the insertion of the one or more fibrous filling elements.
4. (Currently Amended) The implant of ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, in which the porous container is made of fabric, ~~particularly a woven fabric~~.
5. (Currently Amended) The implant of ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, in which ~~the pores in the~~ porous component is configured with pores having ~~have~~ at least one cross-sectional dimension that is less than [[the]] a smallest cross-sectional dimension of the fibrous filling elements.
6. (Currently Amended) The implant of ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, in which the porous component is at least one of configured, ~~and/or~~ formed of, and [[/or]] provided with one or more materials intended to promote tissue growth, particularly tissue ingrowth through at least one of the porous component, ~~and/or~~ between the porous component and one or more of the filling elements, and[[/or]] between two or more of the fibrous filling elements.
7. (Currently Amended) The implant of ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, in which one or more materials used in the porous component is bio-absorbable.

8. (Currently Amended) The implant of ~~any preceding~~ claim 7, in which the bio-absorbable material is used to decrease over time at least one of the amount of porous component present, ~~and/or~~ positions at which the porous component is present, ~~and~~ ~~and/or~~ density at which the porous component is present ~~over time~~.
9. (Currently Amended) The implant of ~~any preceding~~ claim 7, in which the bio-absorbable material restrains the porous component in a first state, the bio-absorption of the material allowing the porous component to assume a second state.
10. (Canceled)
11. (Currently Amended) The implant of ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, in which the one or more fibrous filling elements ~~that are provided as at least one of~~ porous, ~~and/or define~~ defining voids within themselves, and~~[[/or]]~~ defining voids between parts of ~~[[a]]~~ the one or more fibrous filling elements ~~element are provided~~.
12. (Currently Amended) The implant of ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, in which the one or more fibrous filling elements are formed of at least one of unconstrained ~~fibres~~ fibers, ~~and/or~~ unbraided ~~fibres~~ fibers, and~~[[/or]]~~ interlaced ~~fibres~~ fibers.
13. (Currently Amended) The implant of ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, in which the one or more fibrous filling elements are provided with aligned ~~fibres~~ fibers.
14. (Currently Amended) The implant of ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, in which the one or more fibrous filling elements are provided~~[[,]]~~ as at least one of ~~for instance~~ wavy, ~~and/or~~ curved, and~~[[/or]]~~ zig zag ~~fibres~~ fibers.

15. (Currently Amended) The implant of ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, in which the one or more fibrous filling elements ~~with fibres which~~ act to space the fibrous filling elements apart from each other ~~from one another are provided~~.
16. (Currently Amended) The implant of ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, in which the one or more fibrous filling elements are provided ~~with fibres of~~ fibers having two or more different cross sections ~~are provided~~.
17. (Currently Amended) The implant of ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, in which the one or more fibrous filling elements ~~with fibres provided~~ are provided as a plurality of fibers aligned in a first direction ~~are provided~~, with one or more restraining ~~fibres or material~~ fibers which ~~surround and / or enclose and / or be~~ are wrapped around ~~and / or contact a~~ the plurality of ~~fibres~~ fibers.
18. (Currently Amended) The implant of ~~any preceding~~ claim 17, in which the plurality of fibers ~~one or more filling elements~~ are provided with peripheral ~~fibres~~ fibers which are ~~or material provided around the filling element, the peripheral fibres or material being~~ wrapped around the ~~filling elements~~ plurality of fibers in at least one of a spiral manner and ~~and~~ [[/ or]] a criss-cross manner.
19. (Currently Amended) The implant of ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, in which the one or more fibrous filling elements are provided with pieces provided therein, the pieces being intermixed with the one or more ~~fibres~~ fibrous filling elements.
20. (Currently Amended) The implant of ~~any preceding~~ claim 19, in which the pieces are at least one of spheres, beads, and blocks ~~or the like~~.
21. (Currently Amended) The implant of ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, in which the fibrous filling elements are configured with at least one of pores, ~~and/or~~ voids, ~~and/or~~ apertures, and~~and~~ [[/or]] gaps occurring in the fibrous filling elements ~~and/or there between that~~ are due

to at least one of the manner of manufacture of the material from which it is formed fibrous filling element, and ~~or are supplemented~~ supplementation with further pores, ~~and/or voids, and/or apertures, [[or]]~~ and gaps.

22. (Currently Amended) The implant of ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, in which the one or more fibrous filling elements are ~~configured and/or~~ formed with at least one of one or more materials intended to promote tissue growth, particularly tissue ingrowth through at least one of the one or more fibrous filling elements, and/or between the porous component and one or more filling elements, and~~[[or]]~~ between two or more of the fibrous filling elements.
23. (Currently Amended) The implant of ~~any preceding~~ claim 22, in which the one or more materials used in one or more of the fibrous filling elements are bio-absorbable and the bio-absorbable material is used to decrease over time at least one of the amount of one or more fibrous filling elements present, and ~~and/or~~ positions at which one or more fibrous filling elements is present, and ~~and/or~~ density at which the one or more fibrous filling elements is present ~~overtime~~.
24. (Currently Amended) The implant of ~~any preceding~~ claim 23, in which the bio-absorbable material restrains one or more of the fibrous filling elements, ~~or a part thereof, in a first state, the bio-absorption of the material allowing the one or more fibrous filling elements, or a part thereof, to assume a second state, the second state providing at least one of a greater internal volume for the one or more fibrous filling elements, and/or greater porosity for the one or more fibrous filling elements, and/or reduction in mass of the one or more fibrous filling elements, and to and/or provide more space for tissue ingrowth.~~
25. (Currently Amended) ~~A surgical technique in which, at least part of a spinal disc is removed and an implant is provided, the implant having a porous component and one or more filling elements provided within the porous component~~ A method for performing spine surgery for partial replacement of a nucleus of an intervertebral disc, comprising:

gaining access to the nucleus through an incision;
removing at least part of the nucleus to create a space;
inserting an implant into the space, the implant including an outer component
manufactured at least in part of fabric and reduced to a small size to allow insertion into
the space without enlarging the incision; and
inserting at least one fibrous filling element into the outer component during
surgery to expand the outer component.

26. (Canceled)

27. (Canceled)

28. (Currently Amended) ~~A technique according to any of claims 25 to 27~~ The method of claim 25, in which the ~~technique~~ method includes a first time in which the implant provides ~~one or more characteristics~~ at least one characteristic of a naturally occurring disc by virtue of a non-biological mechanism, and a second time at which the implant provides ~~one or more characteristics~~ at least one characteristic of a naturally occurring disc by a combination of a non-biological mechanism and biological mechanism.

29. (Currently Amended) ~~A technique according to~~ The method of claim 28, in which the ~~technique~~ method includes a third time with substantially all of the one or more characteristics of a naturally occurring disc are provided by a biological mechanism.

30. (Currently Amended) ~~A technique according to~~ The method of claim 28, ~~or claim 29~~ in which the transition from the mechanism at the first time to the second time ~~and / or third time~~ is due to bio-absorption of one or more of the materials forming the implant and particularly forming the one or more fibrous filling elements ~~thereon~~.